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Position Statement:

Statement on Use of Antiviral Pharmaceuticals in Poultry

Submitted by AAAP Drugs & Therapeutics Committee (Jan 2016)
Approved by AAAP Board of Directors (Feb 2016)

Viral diseases of commercial poultry are typically handled by vaccination, stress management, or eradication. Vaccination is the common method of control for endemic diseases and a plethora of high quality effective vaccines have been developed over the decades. Stress management involves maintaining optimal temperature and air quality in the house environment while providing adequate feed and water accessibility. Eradication, while the least utilized of the three alternatives, is required for occurrences of diseases of catastrophic implications for poultry health and protection of the nation's food supply. Intertwined in these three actions are the use of good sanitation, personal and animal hygiene, fundamental biosecurity practices, and animal welfare concerns.

Notifiable avian influenza (AI) and Exotic Newcastle would fall into this final category. The poultry industries have a track record of proactive surveillance and reacting to an outbreak, containing it to reduce spread of the disease as well as to minimize bird suffering. While leaving room for development of future technological advances, industry management of poultry viral diseases does not include use of antiviral drugs. These are critically important medications that need to be reserved for use in humans. FDA, through its Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM), evaluates and approves new pharmaceuticals for use in food producing animals. The poultry industry has a proven record of compliance with CVM and will adhere to the indications and directions issued by CVM. FDA has proposed a rule to prohibit the extralabel use in poultry of two classes of antiviral agents approved for use to treat and/or prevent influenza in humans, and the American Association of Avian Pathologists fully supports this proposed ruling. There has not been any use of either of these antiviral drugs in commercial poultry in the U.S.